I:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

sometimes silver, or again may be of cheaper metals. These are allowed to rub one against the other and make a tinkling sound as they move. There are ten toe-rings, one for each toe. It is not to be thought that these things are all worn continually. A few are always worn, and when some opportunity arises to wear the others, they are put on. 301

A lac *tika* is stuck on the forehead of young married women. This is put on by the husband in order that all may see that she is married and also to protect both of them. [585]

TATTOOING. Every woman should have tattoo marks (*godna*) upon her body. Men are not tattooed. The time for this varies. Among more Hinduized sections it is said that it should be done at puberty, that is, at the ages of ten to twelve. Again, and it seems to be the more common custom among the Kols, the *godna* is done shortly before the marriage. In certain cases which we came across, it was said to have been done after marriage. Kols do not do the tattooing themselves, but it is done by the regular tattooer called *bajigar* or *godnari*. 304 [184]

On the accompanying text figures tattoo designs copied from Kol women are shown. There is generally a purpose for each position. Design 1 is placed on various parts of the body. It is found over the right kidney region to take away pain. It is also put on the breasts to ensure a good supply of milk. On the palms of the hands it is believed to help in making *chapatis* light and palatable; on the arms it is supposed to benefit the husband, while on the face it is purely decorative. 304 789 [531]

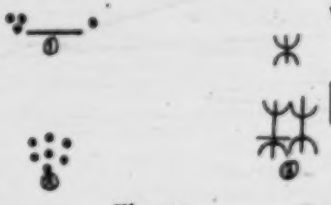

Fig. 12

Design 2 was found inside the left wrist.

Design 3 was on the right leg and takes away pain.

Design 4 was on the outside of the upper left arm. It was mainly decorative, but a protective significance was also suggested. It was said that in this case it took two hours to tattoo the design and that it was a very painful process. (See figure 13.)

Design 5 was found on the same woman on the outside of the left forearm. Another Kol woman had design 6 on the inside of the left forearm. This same woman had design 7 on the outside of the upper left arm. (See figures 14, 15, 16.)

There are certain traditions connected with tattooing. We were once told that when a Kolin is cremated Bhagawan catches the hand which has the *godna* and conducts her to *Baikunthe*. Therefore, it is 304 776 775 789

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

304 775 776 789 exceedingly important that the hands and the arms should be tattooed. In case the body is buried, the tattoos, as another group told us, save the body; for when *Baimata*, a female demon, comes to devour it she cannot eat any of the tattooed portions, and thus much more is left to go to Bhagawan.[1]

304 531 789

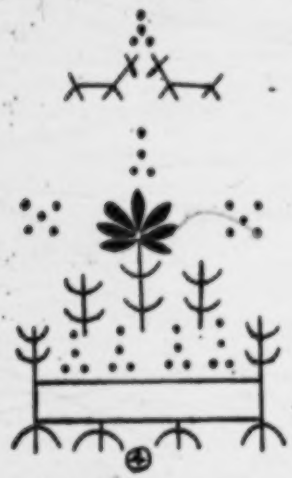

Fig. 13

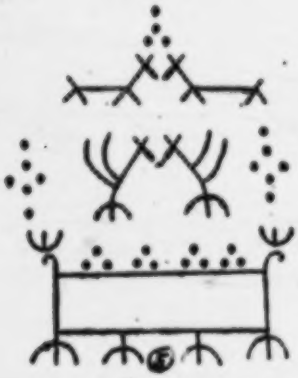

Fig. 14

304 789 Tattooing also wards off the evil eye, to which women, especially when with child, are very susceptible. As stated above, it has also a medical significance, in that it keeps the organs healthy and functioning properly. The tattooings about the ankle are a protection against snake bite.

000 The art of tattooing is probably of Polynesian origin and its widespread practice among Munda tribes may be due to their common racial affinities.

304 It was noted above that Kols say that *Bajigars* do their tattooing. *Bajigar* literally means a 'juggler', 'actor'. Russell and Hiralal know nothing of this group unless it be the same as *Bajgari*, a subcaste of *Gandas*. The latter are wandering musicians and are considered unclean. It is not unlikely that Kols make use of other groups for tattooing but the available information is not conclusive on this point. The [386] term *godnari* means simply "one who tattoos." The colours usually used are blue and black, and the operation is often a painful one. The

1 See Briggs, G. W., *The Chamars*, p. 148.

h Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

of charms used are discussed in the chapter on Magic and Witchcraft.

PUBERTY. From the above mentioned ceremonies until the Kol child reaches puberty, there is little of importance to note. When the first milk tooth falls out the child is told to take it outside near the house, to shut his eyes and to throw it on the roof, never looking to see where it has gone. This will aid in the coming in of the new tooth.

The girl is tattooed when between the ages of ten and twelve and just before her marriage may be given further tattooing. In the Kaimur hills it was said that a woman must be tattooed, for without it Bhagawan would not know how to grasp her and take her spirit on its way to the heavens. No ceremonies occur at the time of tattooing, and apart from saying that it is the custom Kols could give us almost no information on the matter. The designs are usually similar to those of their Hindu neighbours and the actual tattooing is done by the same man who does it for other castes. See the description on pages 28-31.

No particular rites are observed in connection with the girl's first menstruation. At such a time she is asked to stay in the house and if there is a second room into which she can go she retires there. She is not put out into a menstruation hut as is common among some Munda tribes. During the four to six days that the menses last she is considered unclean and should not cook, bring water for the family, nor touch men's clothes. When the menses have ceased she has to go to the village shrine and offer a cocoanut.

Nowhere among the Kols were we able to find any definite trace of puberty rites which are common elsewhere. We were told that a boy of the Kol tribe could only be considered a Kol when he reached the age of twelve to thirteen. In the full sense he becomes of age when he is sixteen. A girl is considered to be of age when she goes to live for good in the house of her husband. No traces were discovered of any ordeal that either sex had to undergo; no scars are made on the body nor were any hair tying ceremonies observed among the groups studied.

Bachelors' Quarters. No trace was found of bachelors' quarters nor of segregated dormitories for boys and girls, which are well-known among the Mundas and allied tribes of Chota Nagpur. The Gonds of Bastar and elsewhere also have them. They have been considered as a place for sex instruction but the system has been widely criticised by the more advanced Mundas and is being abandoned in many places. Other writers have attributed no social or religious importance to these quarters. One writes: "The thing is that the poor people in a village cannot afford to build big houses for themselves containing

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on a bed, if he is on one, as on the ground, but it is mostly affirmed that the ground is the place for the dying person. The body should be put there only when it is certain that the person is about to expire. The place where the body is laid should be first plastered with cow dung if that is possible. The head should be toward the north, that is, pointing towards the sacred Ganges, and the feet to the south, for it is in that direction that the soul has to go to the land of death. Most of the graveyards are to the south of Kol villages.

As soon as it is ascertained that the person is dead the fact of death is publicly proclaimed by loud lamentations set up by members of the family. The lamentations do not seem to be linked up with the frightening away of evil spirits but are essentially a natural expression of grief; although to an outsider they may seem to be overdone. The body should not remain within the house, but should be immediately removed to a place made ready for it on the veranda or the small courtyard in front of the house. There the body is laid upon the ground and is covered with a new white cloth. Nothing is done to the body in the way of measuring its length or the tying of its toes.[1]

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUNERAL. Immediate preparations are now begun for the funeral, which, under favourable circumstances should be underway within an hour or two. Friends prepare a bamboo sling (*latari*), made of two long bamboo poles with a few crossbars. On this the body is placed and fastened. A wooden *charpai* (rope cot) may serve just as well, and if the death occurred on one, this is used. Such a *charpai* has to be discarded anyhow, and in this case it is abandoned at the place of disposal. It is, however, immediately taken possession of by a low caste Hindu—a Basor or a Domar.

Occasionally the body is washed with a bit of cold water at the house before being transported to the place of burial or cremation. The most common procedure, though, is that the body is not washed till the funeral grounds are reached.

If the person has died in the evening, too late for immediate disposal, the body may be kept upon the earth outside the house during the whole of the night. Friends and relatives sit round the body which is regarded with awe and sometimes fear. A lamp is kept burning so that no evil spirit may get possession of the corpse and enter it in the darkness. Nevertheless no efforts are made to tie the corpse

[1] As soon as the body is laid out, some non-Kol groups measure its length and tie its big toes together in order to determine whether or not a live spirit has gained entrance to the body during the period between death and its removal to the cemetery. If a spirit has entered, the body will elongate and the thread about the toes will be broken.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

764 nor measure it to see whether a spirit has gotten within and caused the body to swell. Other groups, such as the Chamars,[1] are said to do this. In Rewa it was reported that they should not wait till daylight, but should make immediate arrangements even though the work has [184] to be done at night. They said that if a man died about 9 p.m., they would have the corpse buried by 3 a.m. This, though, seems to be the exception and not the rule; other groups have denied this, saying that no burial ever occurs at night.

[493] TRANSPORTATION OF THE CORPSE. The body is transported to the burial or cremation grounds on the *tatari* as noted above. The corpse is always carried by men. Among the Oraons it is said that the custom once was that the women always carried the corpse.[2] Four men at a time act as pall bearers. The men are frequently changed so that as many as possible may assist. Even a man's [578] "enemies" should come and help and if such a person does there will be no further enmity between him and the rest of the family. This will also appease the spirit of the deceased. The body is usually carried so that the feet go first. There is a division of opinion on this matter though, as some Kols claim that the head should always be kept in the [823] direction of the Ganges; hence in cases where the graveyard happens to be in the north of the village the head is carried forward. That the feet go first is generally true in other groups, in order, it is said, that the spirit of the deceased may not find its way back. But the [775] Kol has no objection to the spirit's return, and in fact expects it back; actually food is put out near the house for it. If the body is set down for a time the head should point north and the feet south.

On the way to the *masan* or *marghat* (burial place) or the *ghat* or *chita* (burning place) there should be no chanting nor singing nor music of any kind. Lamentation and weeping is all that is in order. The party goes in two groups, first the men with the bier, and, following a short distance behind, the women and the children. The women bring the water for washing the body as well as the oil and turmeric for anointing. As the party proceeds it is customary to drop some mustard seeds along the way, and *laddu* balls made with sweetened *lai* (puffed [787] rice) are also dropped at intervals. On the way back they try to see [775] if these have been picked up, and form an opinion as to whether the [776] omens are good or bad. Some say that if the spirit of the deceased returns he will pick them up. The *rai* seeds will keep the evil spirits

1 Briggs, G. W., *The Chamars*, pp. 100—101.
2 Roy, S. C., *Oraon Religion and Customs*, p. 178.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

new white cloth and is ready to be interred. Nothing in the way of money, implements, or the like is buried with the deceased. 764

The grave is now ready to be filled. Some words of farewell may be spoken. If the person be an adult, words like this are said by the chief mourner: *"Aj se tumhara hamara ho chuka. Jo ham se banta tha wuh main kar chuka. Aj se tum ham alag ho gaye."* "From this day our connection is severed. I did whatever was possible. From this day we are separated." Then all say *"Jao, tum baikunth dham sudharo."* "Go now, go to your dwelling place in paradise." 764 539

For children and young people, who seem to have been cut off untimely, these words are spoken: *"Jao, ab kisi ke ghar ana to pura din leke ana."* "Go, and if you are born in another's house, come with a full life."

While the chief mourner speaks he throws in his handfuls of earth—five or seven. When he has completed the others may throw in some handfuls of earth and all join in doing so. After the body is fairly well covered a layer of thorns and stones is put in. Then more earth and at least another layer of thorns and stones and maybe a third, before the grave is filled. The remaining earth is piled in a small mound over the grave and last of all some flattened stones may be laid on top of it. When asked why the thorns and stones are laid the answer has uniformly been that it is to prevent the body being disturbed by flesh-eating animals, which probably would release the spirit. In view of other common beliefs, it may be that this explanation is a rationalization, as it is quite commonly believed that the stones and thorns may bar the return of the spirit to life and keep any other spirit from gaining possession of the body. 764 [775]

Circumambulation of the Grave. Before the burial is actually completed there is generally a circumambulation of the grave. This does not always occur and there are variations in the procedure. Sometimes it takes the form of a horseshoe-like movement, never making a complete circle, but retracing the steps. The first move in this case is made by the chief male mourner, who goes to the east of the head, walks around the feet to the west of the head and returns. This is done seven times, after which he moves away. Others may follow suit, but usually they do it but once and follow the chief mourner. Another method is that of walking round the grave in a clock-wise direction, keeping the grave always on the right. This is done seven times by the chief mourner. Sometimes the movement about the grave is dispensed with altogether. Except when finally leaving the place, one should never during the formalities turn the back toward

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764 the body or the grave. After that he should not look back but go straight on towards the village.

Before the mourners depart there are certain other things that should be done. The two pice previously mentioned should be laid at the northern end of the grave. These the Basor or some other low caste Hindu present will remove shortly afterwards. Some salt and [789 some mustard seeds are also scattered over the grave. Salt is generally regarded as a protective and devil-scarer, while the mustard protects 263] from evil spirits who are kept so busy picking up the tiny seeds that they have no time to think of evil. Sometimes a little milk and some millet seed are also scattered over the grave. Milk is an offering to Mother Earth.

[372] It is not unusual to keep a fire burning over the place where the head is resting, though this is not the general custom. Such a fire should burn at least two days. This is managed by starting a fire and placing upon it two logs which keep on burning slowly for the next few days. Ordinarily the Kol puts no definite marker on the grave. The stones laid on top help to keep him from digging a new grave where an old was dug; yet it has been reported that in digging a new grave they have often come upon bones. Such a place is covered up and a new start made.

CREMATION. It was noted previously that the question whether a body should be burned or buried is, according to Kols, largely an [435] economic one. Under modern conditions, especially near cities, where wood is scarce and expensive a cremation costs at least Rs. 5 and can hardly be afforded. Even then cremation is considered the most satisfactory method as it gives a greater freedom to the spirit. As [775] long as the skeleton remains undecomposed in the grave, the spirit, if reborn into this world, will have to take some form like his previous one. If, however, the body is burnt and the bones largely consumed, the spirit is free to be reborn into anything else. There are other considerations in the mind of the Kol: children and unmarried young [766] folk should always be buried, as should people dying from diseases such as leprosy, plague and smallpox. One dying of smallpox should on no condition be burned.

If the method of cremation is decided upon, the making ready of the body for this type of disposal is essentially the same as described above in the preparation for burial. Upon arrival at the *ghat*, the funeral pyre, rather than the grave, is prepared. In most cases the wood is purchased, although it is the custom for friends and relatives to bring bits of wood. Cow dung cakes may also be added. Ordinarily

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764 the house, and preferably they should not be brought into the village, but this is not avoidable in all cases. It is usually the custom to hang the *ghara* in a tree at some distance from the house and village, although at times the *ghara* is buried after being sealed and the place above it is marked for later exhumation.

[778 It is preferable that the bones be taken direct from the burning *ghat* to the place of disposal, a sacred river being the most suitable place. 823] The Ganges and the Nerbudda are the best for this purpose; but if there is no immediate hope of being able to go to one of these all the bones and ashes except a mere fraction are thrown into a tank or a stream nearby and the residue is kept for a future trip to one of them. It may be two or three years before this can be done, and if a relative cannot take it a friend may do so.

After the ashes have been collected the place where the body was burned must be treated. It is first plastered, this being done by the women of the house, though the chief mourner may begin it. Over the plastered portion is now scattered the following, or some of the following: rice, rock salt, mustard seed, millet seed, and a little milk. ●[775 A two-pice piece (*takha*) should also be deposited. These things have 789] a dual purpose: they serve the spirit of the departed and also protect it from the encroachment of evil spirits. The growth of the mustard plant, should it sprout, is said to be something in memory of the departed. Sometimes a little sugar "for the ants" is also scattered over the plastered place.

764 *Throwing the Ashes in the River.* We were told at a centre about 177 ten miles from the Nerbudda river, how the ashes should be dealt with 793 if taken to the river. In this place following the more Hinduized types of behaviour, they make use of a Brahmin priest. He performs a ceremony which is called *sirana*, meaning the "head side"; probably signifying the resting place of the head. The ashes are brought to him in the bag or *ghara* and he reads some sacred words from his books and makes a prayer to Yama, the god of death, to accept the spirit of the deceased. This is followed by a prayer addressed to the sacred river, Nerbudda *Mai*. She is implored to accept the ashes and to give peace to the departed spirit. The ashes are then cast into the river. The Brahmin receives a fee in cash or offerings.

764 Further north the Kols look to the Ganges as the river into which 778 the ashes should go if that is possible. The Kols in the south insist that the Nerbudda is just as sacred and as good as the Ganges. One man claimed that occasionally the ashes are divided, half being taken to the Nerbudda and the other half to the Ganges. The place where

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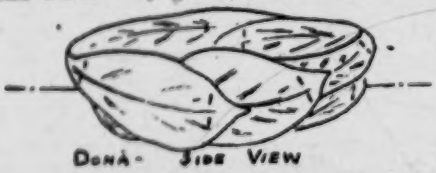
768 765 [302] by a Kol. Often all male members of the family are shaved in this manner. Nothing is done to the female mourners to correspond with this. Unkempt hair and dirty clothes are the signs of their mourning.

765 MOURNING FOR THE DEAD (*Daswi*). This may also be considered as the period of uncleanness, although many Kols do not recognize it as such. The number of days that the dead should be mourned, and certain taboos observed, varies according to sex and age. For a man or for a married youth the period is ten days, hence "*daswi*";—for a woman or a married maiden nine days; for a child it varies according to age: five days, three days, or, if it is a very small child there is no period of mourning at all. All over the area the customs are uniform [184] in the cases of men and women, but for children there seems to be a considerable variation of custom.

765 262 During the period of mourning certain foods are taboo and certain kinds of cooking vessels must not be used in the preparation of food. Only simple food should be eaten: nothing should therefore be cooked in *ghi* or oils. No salt or flesh of any kind should be taken. The cooking vessels which are taboo are those in which rich foods are prepared and cooked in oils and *ghi*, such as a frying pan. This rules out the cooking of *puris*. The food during that period must always be [264] eaten at home, and on no account should one accept food cooked in another's house or by someone who is not a member of the family, even if it is cooked in his own house. Violators of these regulations [623] are dealt with by the *panch*. One should also stay pretty close to home, and should not freely enter others' houses, especially at the time they are eating.

765 775 FEEDING THE DEAD. The Kols have a custom of feeding the dead which they generally call *dona*, or *dauna rakhna*. The dead should be fed twice daily during the period of mourning if one can afford it, and if not, once in the evening. This is discontinued after the funeral feast. The chief mourner is generally expected to prepare this food, or it may be prepared along with the ordinary household food. Such food is placed on a *dona*, leaf-plate, and is taken out from the house to a distance of from thirty to forty yards, in the direction of the graveyard. This is placed in the crotch of a tree or it may be set down on the ground. Other things may also be placed there, things the



DONA - SIDE VIEW

Fig. 23

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

departed liked best in life : sweets, tobacco, and the like. A little water is generally left too. They assert that liquor is never put out. As soon as the food is set out they quickly turn and do not look back lest they should disturb the eater. If the *masan* is not too far away the food may

DONÅ-LEAF PLATE ON WHICH THE DEAD ARE FED

Fig. 24

be placed on the grave. The usual procedure, though, is to place it near the old home. The belief is that the spirit of the deceased wanders about for ten days and frequents his old haunts. After ten days *dutas*, corresponding to angels, come for the soul and conduct it to another realm. The Kols seem to have no great fear of the spirits of their departed. Nothing is done to appease their anger, and they are thought to be in general kindly disposed toward their loved ones. There was some evidence of fear in a few cases where, they said, if the ashes are not deposited in the river the spirits might come and trouble them ; but this may be a part of another outlook. On the whole Kols regard their dead as kindly. The food, which they set out day by day, is consumed by birds or other animals. There is no special kind of food placed out, merely that used by them in the house during the time of mourning.

FUNERAL FEAST (*Din Pani*). If the deceased was a male the funeral feast occurs on the tenth day after the death, and if a female on the ninth day. The time of the feast after a child's death is not so uniform. Unless the child is grown up and rather important, it is not usual to have a feast ; or if there is one it is a private one within the home. But in the case of adults such a feast must always be given, otherwise the honour of the tribe would be tainted, and the family rebuked by the *panch*. On the morning of the feast preparations for it are made in the house.

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764 762 522 cannot get such faithful wives—they prefer to run away," and there was a hearty laugh.

766 In some parts of India the bodies of young children are sometimes buried under the floor of the house in which they lived but this custom does not prevail among the Kols. Children are buried in the regular *masan*, and not in a special place by themselves. If both mother and child die at the time of childbirth they are buried together in one grave. If they die on different days so that they cannot be buried together they are given separate burials.

Those dying abnormal deaths, by suicide, accident, or childbirth, are not treated differently from those dying in other ways. Kols are unlike most Hindus in this respect.

764 765 824 184 Sometimes grass plays a part in the funeral ceremonies, and in Rewa State we found that Kols used *urai* grass (*Vetiveria zizanioides*) at such a time. It was stated that at the time of bathing after the return from the funeral ground a bunch of *urai* grass should be held in the right hand and that it too should be bathed. At least the chief mourner should do this. During the following days and until the time of the funeral feast this same bunch of grass should be carefully washed every day. On the day of the funeral feast it is thrown into the tank or river.

764 823 301 184 [783 775 An interesting explanation of the use of small plugs if gold put into holes bored in the front teeth came from the Rewa State. It was said that when one died and the body was cremated the teeth would not be consumed by the fire and the gold would still be in them Or even if the gold had melted out it would be in the ashes, and would be gathered with them and taken to the river. The throwing of gold into a river, particularly the Ganges, is a gift to the gods and pleases them and the spirit gets *aram*—rest—in the after life in *baikuntha*—the abode of *Vishnu*.

764 304 789 Tattoo marks are said to have a certain significance at the time of death. This applies to women as the men are not tattooed. If a woman has tattoo marks on her forearm, and also on her upper arm, the arms are so folded when she is placed in the grave that the two tattooed places touch each other. This is said to somehow afford protection, please the gods and help the spirit on its way.[1] See also pages 29 and 30.

764 823 The chief mourner should also keep a piece of iron about his person during the days of mourning, and possibly ever after. Sometimes, just before burial, this piece which is to act as a charm, is touched to the

1 See Crooke, *Op. Cit.*, p. 296.

l:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

brow of the deceased seven times as the mourner encircles the body. It is then put into the clothes and carried about.

If a woman is carrying a *ghara* of water and sees a dead body she should at once throw out the water and return to get a fresh supply.

KOL CONCEPTION OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH. It was noted that it is not a general belief among the Kols that the spirits of the dead return to trouble the family. The belief that the spirit of a pregnant woman becomes a *churel* is well known but even this is not consistently held. Further comments on this aspect will be found in a later section.[1]

Generally speaking, the Kols believe that the spirits of the good dead go to a place called *baikuntha* which in a general sense corresponds to a place of happiness, or paradise. The wicked may sometimes return as evil spirits—a male as a *bhut* and a female as a *churel*; but one must be rather wicked to be so severely punished. Others say that the spirits of the bad go to *narkunda*, the Hindu hell, a sort of well or pit in the lower regions.

The Kols know the doctrine of *samsara* or transmigration of souls, but they seem to have neither a clear idea of its details nor of its implications. While this belief is usually admitted when they are questioned and reflected in some of their practices, nevertheless the general conception seems to play but a minor part in their thinking of the present and the future. "From now on we have nothing to do with one another."

1 See Chapter IX : Churel.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

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177 to say, Kols living away from strong Hindu influences do not pay particular attention to this, although it is known and mentioned.

Dasara is a very important Hindu festival and is celebrated on the tenth day of the Hindu month *Kunwar*—portions of September and October. In this case again, the Kols enter into it quite freely, yet it is not one of their important festivals. The Hindu legends connected with this day seem to indicate that it is a day to celebrate a victory and hold military displays.

[788] Any observation among the Kols usually takes the form of a procession of men to the village boundary, carrying with them lights and torches, the procession being marked by the beating of drums and the singing of the men. From there they return home rejoicing as if from a victory, and are greeted by the women who have a feast ready.

It is also a semi-agricultural festival with some, as the wheat should not be sown till after *Dasara*. Ten days before *Dasara* wheat is sown in the houses. This is discussed in connection with the *Jawara* festival,[1] which seems to be the most important to the Kol and overlaps both *Dasara* and *Holi*.

[821] *Devali*. This is the feast of lights and comes twenty days after *Dasara*, and is held on the new moon day (*Amavasya*) of the Hindu month *Kartik* (October-November). This too is predominantly a Hindu festival, and the Kols observance is largely by imitation. Hindus set out lights, and the illuminations, particularly in cities [775] where it is well observed, are very beautiful. The Hindu believes that on this night the souls of the good dead return to visit their old haunts. So the houses are made ready—all is clean; old earthen lamps are thrown away and new ones replace them. The new ones should burn all night, and the family will stay up to receive the spirits of their deceased, not yet reborn.

Kols usually go no further than first burning a *diya* inside the house in front of the inner place of worship, invoking, they say, Shardamai, though the names of all the gods and goddesses known to them should be uttered before the shrine, as well as the names of their own sainted dead. Then the lamp is taken up and together with a few others is set on the doorstep to guide the spirit. If the Kol has any wealth, he may worship that too; but there is usually so little that they do not take it into account.

Hareli. The word literally means "greenery", and it appears that only the Hinduized Kols have much knowledge of it. Among

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776 Many of the daily occurrences can be traced to their activity. They are sometimes friendly, but it actually happens that they are more often unfriendly and do their best to injure and annoy human beings. The Kols have mentioned certain kinds of spirits with which they are familiar. A few Kols have claimed actual encounters with them, and yet others were not quite so certain of their existence.

775 761 *The Bhut* is commonly mentioned by the Kol, but the use of the term is frequently in a general sense. Ordinarily this is the spirit of one who has died a sudden or a tragic death. A *bhut* is always of the male gender. The spirit of a man killed by a train is sure to become a wandering *bhut*. So is the spirit of a murdered man, as well as one dying of a dread disease. The general belief is that it will remain in this form for twelve years until released. In a general sense, any man not taken up by Bhagawan after death becomes a wandering *bhut*. [165] Another curious explanation was given. It was claimed that the expectation of life for a Kol is about thirty years, and for this period one must dwell on earth, whether in the body or in the spirit. If a person twenty years of age should die for any reason, his spirit will still have to stay upon the earth for another ten years, and will wander in the form of a *bhut*. A man living past thirty years of age will not become a *bhut* unless he meets a tragic end. The same group also related that during this unexpired period in which the spirit must wander upon the earth, the spirit of a very good man becomes a very evil *bhut*, while the spirit of a very bad man was a friendly and harmless *bhut*!

775 682 The *bhut* of a murdered man is certain to haunt the murderer's family and in the course of time is sure to destroy it. Murder thus means only more trouble and Kols should never resort to it. It is a fact that murders among Kols are very unusual. *Bhuts* as a rule never injure members of their own families and will even help them. Therefore the Kol holds that one should never fear the spirit of a loved one.

775 *Bhuts* and other spirits may enter a room as does the air which comes in everywhere; though the average Kol usually considers that they enter through some larger opening in the house, such as a door [342] or a window. The lack of windows in Kol houses is partly due to this point of view.

The Churel is the spirit of a female who has died in distressing circumstances, especially if the death was caused by child bearing. The *churel* is of dreadful appearance, and her feet, if one would look at them, are turned backwards. She often attempts to seduce men and ruin them. As a rule her front is attractive but she is black and

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putrid behind. She often dwells in a palm tree. Certain Munda tribes, like the Bhuiyas, sometimes extract the fetus from a woman dying in pregnancy, and the two are buried on the opposite sides of a stream, as it is the theory that no spirit can cross water.[1] If the two should join they become witches. Kols do not practice this as far as we were able to learn, and no operation of this nature is performed. The woman is buried with the child still in her womb.

The Danawa is said by the Kols to be one of the most powerful of all spirits. He is likely related to the Vedic *Danava* who was connected with Vritra, one of the atmospheric demons. He lives in tall trees, and, if he can get the opportunity, attacks one at night, catching his victim round the throat and almost choking the unfortunate person to death. He is particularly met with in the Kaimur jungles.

The Jind, or more popularly *Jin*, according to the Kols, is the spirit of a Mohammedan, although it is usually considered one of the many kinds of spirits known to Mohammedans. Kols have a very bad opinion of *Jinds*, yet say that they know little about them, as they do not pay much attention to Kols but are out to injure Mohammedans.

The Kabbis is a lover of human blood. This demon has long teeth and sharp nails and attacks one ferociously. The nails are used to make deep cuts which let the blood flow and it is sucked or licked up by them. If the victim should struggle and give trouble, the demon will plunge his long teeth into the body and thus hold him while he drains out the man's life blood.

Matia is the demon of the whirlwind. It may destroy crops, bring up great storms and carry away roofs and thatch houses. During the warm season whirlwinds are common and one can trace their course by a cloud of dust reaching far up into the sky. Vultures soar about, looking for those whom *Matia* may destroy.

The Pret is the spirit of the deformed, the cripple, or the mentally defective. Males become *prets* and females are *pretins*. While Kols commonly mention them they usually do not believe them to be very dangerous, nor can they cause much trouble. Rather they should be pitied and fed, so sometimes food and water are placed out for them if they are suspected of being in the vicinity.

The Rakshasa is a terrible injurer and the very name of this demon is an euphemism, 'the preserver.' Most Kols have a great fear of a *rakshasa* and the report is that this kind is more commonly seen than any other and that they also suck blood if they can get a chance. They are usually about at night time and are very dangerous to women who are with child, and try to gain access to the house by

1. Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 195.

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776 entering into it in the form of a dog, a cat or an owl. They may assume almost any form and their bite is very poisonous. They can quickly change their shape and appearance. The female type, called *rakshasi* goes about in the likeness of a beautiful girl and seduces men. Nevertheless, this type of demon is easily fooled and if one is clever and does not lose his nerve he can outwit them.

Kols are also familiar with other kinds of spirits such as the *gayal*, the *pisach* and the *kogi*, but little seems to be known about them. The literature on tribes and castes is rich in spiritism and much might be compiled concerning spirits. The above represents the usual Kol point of view.

776 824 775 THE DWELLING PLACE OF SPIRITS. Kols believe that trees are the most likely place for spirits to dwell. The *banyan* tree seems to be the favourite place for the spirit, although it is said that the *churel* prefers a *nim* tree, particularly if broken or dead. It is claimed that the mango and the *bel* trees are not often inhabited by spirits. The tamarind tree is connected with the *jind*.

776 823 Spirits may also dwell in rocks and certain weird shapes in their appearance are probably due to the activity of some spirit living there.

776 825 764 Animals may become habitations for spirits, and some, like the *rakshasas*, freely enter into them. The graveyard and the burning grounds are sure to have some spirits dwelling near them and Kols avoid such places; or if they must pass by, go two by two. Such places should never be approached at night.

776 342 789 It was noted that spirits enter houses through doors and other openings. Doors are therefore generally surrounded by demon-scarers, and windows are never found. Evil spirits also enter and dwell in human beings, coming in through the mouth, eyes, ears or nose; so these points should be especially protected. They may also run up the legs or the arms and suitable bangles are worn to prevent this.

754 THE EVIL EYE: NAZAR. Men and women may also be possessed of an evil power to injure or distress one another. The evil eye, *nazar*, exerts a powerful and dangerous influence and is often evidenced by a squint or the loss of an eye. The person with an evil eye has an inherent power which may be transmitted through a mere glance, and this power strikes one as surely as a bullet. The very glance of such persons is particularly penetrating and it is not good to have any one gaze at you, for it may be that death is in the look. Children are particularly liable to be affected by the evil eye, and ill health and

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776 754 493 that several men had already lost their lives, and others had been injured because they failed to show deference. At any time of the day one who passes this place should get off his cycle, stop, ask permission of the spirit to pass by, then walk with his cycle and mount it again a few paces beyond.

789 PROTECTIVE MEASURES. Various kinds of devices are used by Kols to ward off the power and effectiveness of the evil eye and the spirit world. The protective remedies commonly employed are listed alphabetically.

[195 533 585] *Abuse.* The abusive language and songs generally used at the time of the wedding have a prophylactic value. There is somehow resident in *gali* a power which protects the bride and groom from evil influences.

789 372 *Ashes* are commonly employed both on religious and social occasions. Immediately after birth the new-born babe is dusted with ashes. They are also scattered over the place of birth, lest the spirits get a portion of the afterbirth and use it against the child and the family. A magic circle of ashes is put around the bed of the mother and her new-born child. When the *nara*, the stump of the umbilical cord, falls off, it is buried in the floor of the house, and a fire which is kept burning over the spot constantly supplies fresh ashes.

[844]

Ashes are kept in shrines to frighten evil spirits away. A portion thrown into the air from time to time will be effective in doing this. A fleck of ashes in a child's mouth after feeding with milk keep *bhuts*, who are passionately fond of milk, at a safe distance from the child. The ashes from burnt cow dung cakes are especially useful as are the ashes of wood from the *bel* tree.

[775] [237]

789 301 *Bangles* are a protection. The glass types are mostly decorative, but their colours are efficacious as certain colours repel demons. Kols believe that metal bangles are the most effective, particularly the copper and iron types. As *bhuts* may enter through the feet or hands, bangles on the wrists and ankles prevent that way of entry.

[775]

Beads about the neck of children are particularly defensive against the evil eye. They should be of bright colours and the Kols most often use a type made from lac. Blue beads about the necks of cattle help to protect them from the evil eye and all valuable animals should be so guarded. A unique charm noted in this connection, though not among the Kols, was that of old bicycle chains fastened about the necks of cattle.

[832]

789 776 372 *Charcoal*, because it is a form of ash and black in colour, is a devil-scarer. Mixed with milk and wine and spread in a circle, it

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789 *Iron* is, on the whole, probably the most common of protective metals;
823 and while some put copper above iron, nevertheless in the case of the Kols, iron appears to be more widely used than copper. The use of iron takes many forms. A woman should always have a bit of iron about her as she is usually exposed to evil influences more than are the men folk. This may take the form of a bracelet, an anklet, a ring on the finger, or an iron ring about the neck. Again it may be just a piece of the metal tied somewhere in the garments or on a string about the waist.
[755] A sick man should always have iron about him to prevent further demonic influences during his period of helplessness. An iron key is a protective and even nails in shoes are useful in this respect. A piece of iron
[513] ought to be under the head as one sleeps and iron nails are often driven into the four corners of a wooden cot should the Kol sleep on one. In the case of children iron helps to repel the evil eye. At the wedding
[585] time the bridegroom carries iron about with him, and iron is found in the wedding booth.

Iron protects houses from the entry of evil spirits and makes their habitation there impossible. Therefore, when a house is built
[342] iron is buried under the floor, particularly near the threshold. Even though unseen by the human eye it will influence the demons and they fear to enter and abide in the house. Perhaps *bhuts* are thought
[775] of as still living in the stone age and dreading the new-fangled iron and its power to break the strongest things of which they know.

789 *Lac*, obtained from the gum of the *Khairwar* tree (*Acacia catechu*),
[314] and prepared in the form of bangles and beads, averts the evil eye and wards off spirits. This is variously coloured.

Lampblack is widely used for children and protects them from
[751] the evil eye. While it disguises them and renders them less attractive, it also has the practical purpose of protecting the eye from the glare of the sun. The lampblack, mixed with oil to make a paste, is placed just below the eyes and often gives the child a weird and unnatural appearance.

789 *Leather* is a very common devil-scarer throughout India and has
237 its uses for the Kols, such as the custom of employing it in connection
291 with the building of houses. For protection, in this instance, an old shoe will generally be found stuck somewhere about the wall which is being built. This is apparent in the picture appearing in connection with building customs.[1] If they can be afforded, leather shoes with nails in them are a double protection, and no Kol goes on a long journey with-
[484] out taking a pair of country shoes with him even though he seldom uses them. He will carry them hanging from a stick or in his hands.

1 See plate VIII.

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775 776 789 MEETING A SPIRIT. Even though properly protected from spiritual forces one is still not immune from their attacks. If one should meet a spirit it is always proper to be very respectful in its presence and to try not to offend it in any way. If the *bhut* is addressed as one would address a gentleman he may behave like one. If one moves further on and the *bhut* insists on following, the person attended may, provided he is properly protected by charms, call out the name of Khermai three or four times in rapid succession. Her very name is so powerful that the evil spirit is helpless and goes away disgusted. But should the person not be properly protected by amulets and the like, he should not call upon Khermai.

If it should be necessary to pass the known dwelling place of a *bhut* or other spirit, the person should first stop and respectfully ask the spirit to let him pass safely. No person should be boastful in the presence of a spirit nor use the name of Khermai except as a last resort. The spirit should be addressed as "Maharaj" if a male, and [576] if a female as "Mata". These respectful forms of address are pleasing to them and they will allow such people to pass without harm.

789 [791] [648] HOW SPIRITS MAY BE CAST OUT. Evil spirits may be cast out only by those who know the secret processes and *mantras* necessary, and such secrets are usually carefully guarded by the initiated. The *panda* is probably familiar with methods although not all of them would admit that they were, and a member of the Baiga tribe is *par excellence* the man. The *bawa* is usually associated with this ceremony.

The *supa* method, forms of which are described below, is the usual method of driving out an evil spirit. Again, the priest while possessed of the *devi* may order the family to perform certain rites, such as feeding the group, sacrificing at the shrine, abstaining from rich foods, and the like; or he may even beat the unfortunate being with his iron lash until the blood flows. This will surely frighten the demon away.

There is another form known to the Kols by the name of *jharna*, 'the sifting or winnowing'. A *supa* (winnowing fan), a *hansiya* (sickle) [824] and a bit of *Kans* grass (*Saccharium spontaneum*) are made use of in [785] this particular wave ceremony. The person on whom these will be used must have fasted for a period and have had *mantras* pronounced over him, then the above articles are one by one waved over him. The sickle, the grass and the winnowing fan are all symbolical of removing a spirit: the sickle, as it is first waved, symbolizes the cutting down of the spirit, the grass implies the work is done, and in the sifting

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spirits or goddesses. It has been noted that the mango branch plays an important part in wedding functions. It was also noted that in building the wedding booth Kols ought to use, if possible, wood from the *saleh* tree (*Boswellia serrata*) both for the main supports of the *marhwa* and for the sacred pole, the *magrohan*. The consensus of opinion is that for the latter the *saleh* is absolutely indispensable.

The *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) is found beside Kol shrines and in the courtyards of their houses. It should be watered daily and its leaves are said to have certain medicinal qualities, being especially effective in fevers. Tulasi was once a woman who engaged in religious austerities for a long time and at last dared to ask to become a wife of Vishnu. For this presumption Tulasi was cursed by Lakshmi the wife of Vishnu, and was turned into this plant. Vishnu comforted her by promising to be near her in the form of a *salagrama* stone. So they are often associated in worship and even in Kol shrines a *salagrama* stone is usually found close to the *tulasi* plant. The leaf is highly scented and a bit is often broken off by Kols and eaten with their food. During the evening hours it is worshipped by having a small *dip* lighted before it.

Dead trees are generally feared as the death of a tree is most certainly due to an evil spirit's influence and a *churel* often kills a tree to make a residence for herself.

MARRIAGE OF TREES. The Kols have a ceremony for the marriage of trees. The mango tree is the one usually married and this should be done at the time it first begins to bear fruit. Unless such a tree has been married no adult should eat of the fruit, although a child may do so. There are at least two methods of marrying trees, both of which require the Brahmin priest. In the first instance a mango tree should be married to a tamarind tree (*Tamarindus indicus*). This tree may be near at hand, or even some distance from the mango tree. The ceremony appears to consist in having a married couple wind a cotton thread coloured with *haldi* seven times around the tree. They should move about the tree in a clockwise direction and as they do this the Brahmin recites sacred texts. First the mango tree is wound then the tamarind; if they are close enough together the thread may be stretched from one to the other. It is not unusual to find a mango and a tamarind tree planted close by. Many of the features of the regular wedding are incorporated, and following the function there is a feast.

In the second instance a small wooden peg, variously coloured, takes the place of the tamarind tree. This may be made out of tama-

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824 796 rind wood, although this does not seem to be essential. Stakes for this purpose may be purchased ready for use in the bazaars when the mango crop is about to ripen.

The peg is driven into the ground near the tree or trees which are to be married. One peg will do for a number of trees and it reduces the expense in connection with the ceremony. The Brahmin priest will stretch a thin yellow thread from the peg to each of the trees. The owner of the trees has some supplies on hand, said to include *til* oil, rice, *lawa* and *ghi*. Each person present is given a bit of these things which are put into a fire by the sacred pole at the signal of the priest, who says "swaha, swaha," as they are being cast in. The fire blazes up and gives off a scented smoke. The *pandit* (or even the *nai*), then ties, first of all, a bit of yellow cord around the wrist of the owner, and then on the wrist of each one present. The owner [431] should give to everyone present a gift of uncooked rice, the amount varying according to his ability. This ceremony should be performed just before or after the time the tree bears its first fruits. A tree is married only once.

312 796 TANKS AND WELLS. There is a somewhat similar ceremony in the case of wells and tanks. In village India large earthen tanks are commonly used to store water. Water not so wedded will not be as potable as it ought to be. In the case of a tank there should be a pole set up in the centre of the pond. This is said to represent the male element, the husband of the spirit inhabiting the tank and guarding it. It may also correspond to the *magrohan*. An unmarried tank may be molested by evil spirits and the pole warns such away. No coherent account of a ritual in this connection could be obtained from the Kols.

Wells are "married" by putting a bit of *sendur* on the coping and the well is circumambulated seven times by a married couple. Another account was that a Brahmin is called who worships, says *mantras* and performs the *hom* sacrifice. Following this he drinks a *lota* of water and others follow suit. This is sufficient to consecrate a well and make its waters sweet and wholesome.

162 775 MISCELLANEOUS BELIEFS. A number of other animistic beliefs may be mentioned here:

The man who commits suicide does a very foolish thing and it seldom occurs among Kols, for, they say, the police make a great fuss about a suicide, and there is much trouble as a result, and the whole community is hurt. But if committed, hanging from trees is the usual method resorted to. The soul of such a person cannot go to *baikunth* (Vishnu's heaven), and is doomed to wander about homeless

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and fearful for at least twelve years. Usually such spirits are not dangerous, and some have said that after twelve years they go to Bhagawan or may be born into the world again. 762 775

Sometimes the woman may die in childbirth and the child be born alive. If so, it is thought very likely that the child owes its life to an evil spirit, who desires it for some evil purpose, and hence the child may really be a *bhut*. It is very difficult to get a wet nurse for such children and they usually do not survive very long. 845 776 775

We happened to be in a Kol village a few hours after an earthquake and we asked a group what caused the movement of the earth. Nearly all at once agreed that the earth shook because of *pap*, or sin. One or two though, began to think and said that the real reason was that the earth rested upon the heads of *Nag*—a many-headed serpent, and that once in twelve years he had to shift the earth from one head to another and that produced an earthquake. But when confronted with the obvious fact that an earthquake came oftener than once in twelve years they were puzzled and could not account for it. The latter explanation is the one frequently advanced among Hindus, but Kols were not very familiar with it. 823 [773] 177]

Rain, so intimately connected with the welfare of forest people, may often be brought to pass by magical processes, and there are frequent instances of this among the tribes and castes of Central Provinces. In many of these rites nudity is an essential part, for moved by pity at their representation of poverty, Indra or some rain *devta* will grant refreshing showers. No trace of nudity practices was found among the Kols. The more sophisticated Kol believes that rain is sent only by Indra, the Vedic god of rain, and that it is only through a Brahmin that the gift of rain may be secured. 821 [291] [177]

Some Kols use frogs in an attempt to bring the rains. Frogs and rains are intimately associated in their minds, for in the weeks that precede the coming of the monsoon, the frogs croak long and loudly, and it is thought that their calls bring the showers. So if the monsoon is delayed and there is a drouth, Kol boys will round up all the frogs they can. The larger they are the better for this purpose. A thread is tied round the leg of each frog and they are then dragged about the village. As they pass by houses the people living there come out and sprinkle a bit of water over them. The boys and their frogs finally end up at the village shrine and the latter are tied before the *devi*. It is said that the croaking of the frogs at the shrine will affect the *devi* resident there and she too will long for cooling showers, so she gets to work and uses her influence and power to help bring the rain to pass. 821 825 789